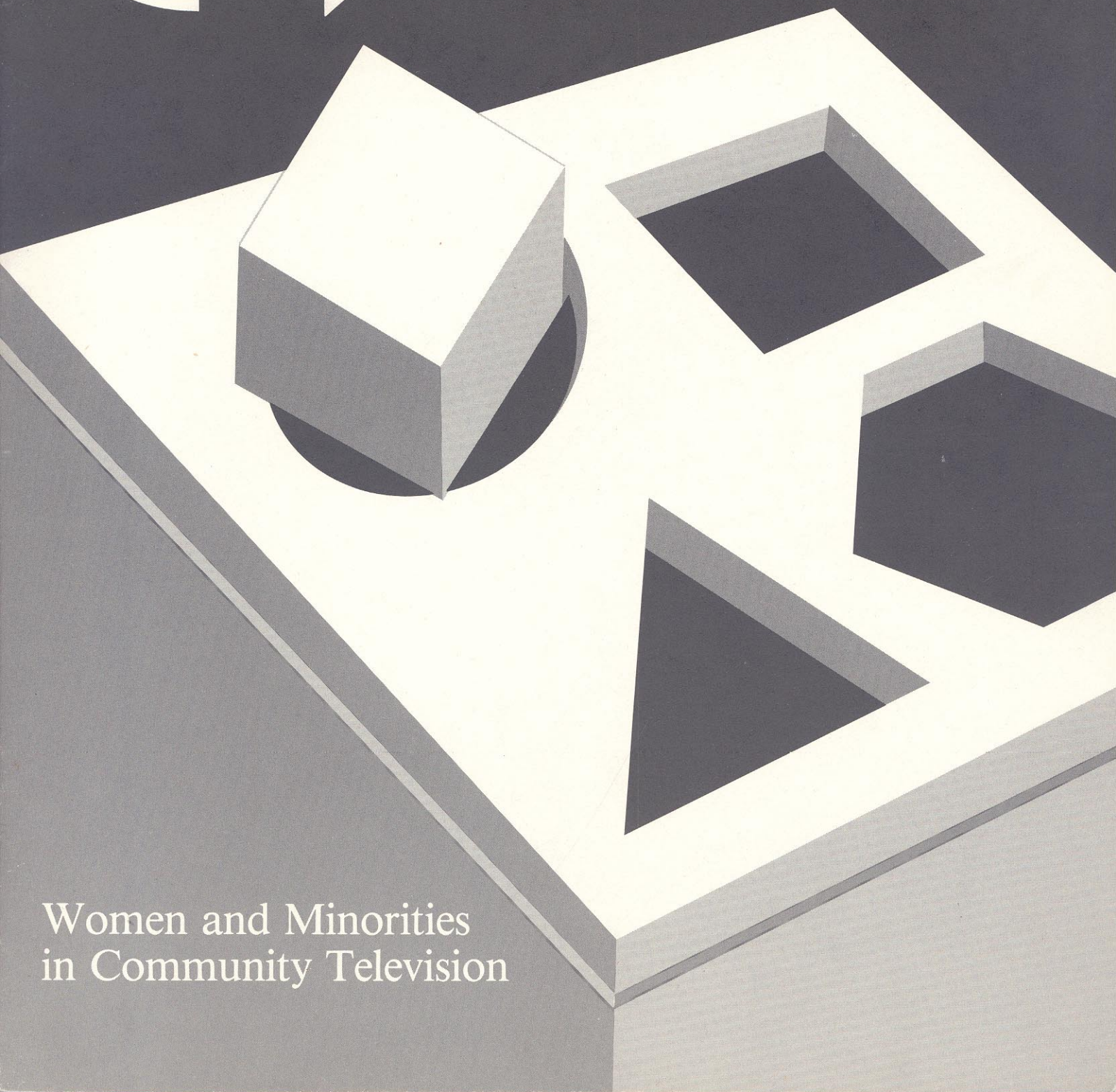


CTR

Community Television Review

Spring 1982
\$3.00



Women and Minorities
in Community Television

Calendar

July 8-11, Fifth Annual Convention of the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers, Radisson-St. Paul Hotel, St. Paul, Minnesota.

July 18-22, "Communications and the Future," Conference, Fourth General Assembly of the World Future Society, Sheraton Washington Hotel, Washington, D.C. Contact: Eric Seaborg, (301) 656-8274.

July 19-24, Annual Conference, National Federation of Community Broadcasters, MacAllister College, St. Paul, Minnesota.

August 1-6, 36th Annual Conference, the University Film and Video Association, exploring the past, present and future impact of international film/video/television. Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL. Contact: Dept. of Cinema and Photography, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901 (618) 453-2365.

September 1st, Deadline for entry, 1982 Women at Work Broadcast Awards, Avon Products Inc. with National Commission on Working Women. Contact: Sally Steenland, NCWW, 2000 P Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

September 9-11, Annual Convention/Eastern Show, Southern Cable Television Association, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, GA. Contact: Nancy Horne, (404) 237-8228.

September 20-22, Second Annual Conference, National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors, "Telecommunications: Managing in the Public Interest," Seattle, Washington. Contact: Frank Greif, (206) 625-2268.

September 26-28, "Upgrading Cable Systems: Renegotiation, Rebuilds, Renewal and

Refranchising," University of Wisconsin/Extension, Concourse Hotel, Madison, WI. Contact: Barry Orton, (608) 262-3566.

October 1-3, Conference/Exhibition, LPTV East, Conference Management Corporation with Global Village, Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C.

November 12-14, First National Conference, Union for Democratic Communications, Philadelphia, PA. Contact: UDC Newsletter, c/o Karen Paulsell, NYU-TITP, 725 Broadway, NY 10023.

November 13-15, Second Annual Programming Symposium, NCTA, Biltmore Hotel, Los Angeles. Contact: NCTA, (202) 775-3550.

November 17-19, Annual Convention/Western Show, California Cable Television Association, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, California. Contact: CCTA, (415) 881-0211.

If you know of upcoming conferences, meetings, festivals, screenings or other special events, please tell us about them. Send all information to CTR Calendar, c/o University Community Video, 425 Ontario SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414.

To our Readers

The NFLCP apologizes for the late distribution of the previous two issues of *CTR*. Changes and updates in our membership recording system have regrettably delayed both the production and mailing of *CTR*. A new, computerized system is now in effect

and subsequent issues should be delivered on a more timely basis.

Additionally, the financial demands of putting out a publication like *CTR* are an increasing burden to the Federation. Each membership or subscription we receive helps to insure the continued production of this quality magazine. Every attempt will be made to meet our production schedule.

Thank you, The NFLCP

A Publication
of the National
Federation of Local
Cable Programmers
**Community
Television
Review**

Volume 5 No. 2



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A word to the Readers

"A square peg in a round hole" suggests something that's the wrong shape or is somehow inappropriate; it just doesn't fit. In the context of Women and Minorities in community television, we see it differently.

The articles we have selected for this issue will help to demonstrate that a square need not take on the characteristics of a circle in order to fit in. Women and Minorities have found spaces for themselves in community television, from programming to ownership. Sometimes we've had to be told where the spaces are, how big they are and be convinced that they indeed need filling.

The people who now take up the spaces are the same people they always were. They haven't changed. The circles working in the squares are as circular as ever, but in their roundness, they lend a new dimension and depth to community television.

We applaud the work of the individuals and groups who have maintained their own identity while filling some of the gaps that exist in the representation of people of all kinds.

These few profiled here have only scratched the surface, however. There's still a lot of work to be done.

Margaret Schulz
Assistant Editor



AccessProfile

East Lansing's Black Notes

Minority Programming: Breaking the Image

by Marsha Smith and Michael Lewis

*In the beginning
The Ideology of our organization
was found in the scribbles
of dark ink
We are still
Black Notes.*

Ted Brown

After many nights of thought and countless discussions in the dim light reflected off the basement wall, Black Notes was born. It has expanded from just an idea in the minds of a young black group interested in the media, to an effective production organization incorporating both students and the community.

The first show, aired in 1972 from the National Cable Company in East Lansing, was a panel discussion concerning the prison systems in Michigan. The format of the show has undergone many changes in the last 10 years. The diversified interests and talents of the group propelled Black Notes from news to variety, from documentary to drama, to our present program which is a mixture of three basic segments of news/community, variety and drama.

The first segment, news/community, deals with community issues in the Greater Lansing area. Unlike local media coverage, the show is focused on the problems and the struggles faced by the minorities in the area. Our interviewers have discussed issues with top community leaders such as Michigan's Secretary of State Richard Austin, Atty. Clinton Kennedy, and professors Harry Reed and Richard Thomas of Michigan State University. Utilizing East Lansing's Public Access black and white remote equipment, Black Notes has also recorded speeches and has had mini-interviews with such National figures as Mrs. Jean Childs Young, wife of Andrew Young, former Ambassador to the United Nations; Jessie Jackson; and

Mrs. Coretta Scott King. Another feature is the community calendar citing upcoming events.

The variety segment introduces some of the younger talents and reclaims some of the older ones. Those beginning their careers find the taping doubly useful in that they have their own critiques for feedback as well as free publicity. The older ones find joy in the fact that their experience and culture can be shared with new generations. We have also had

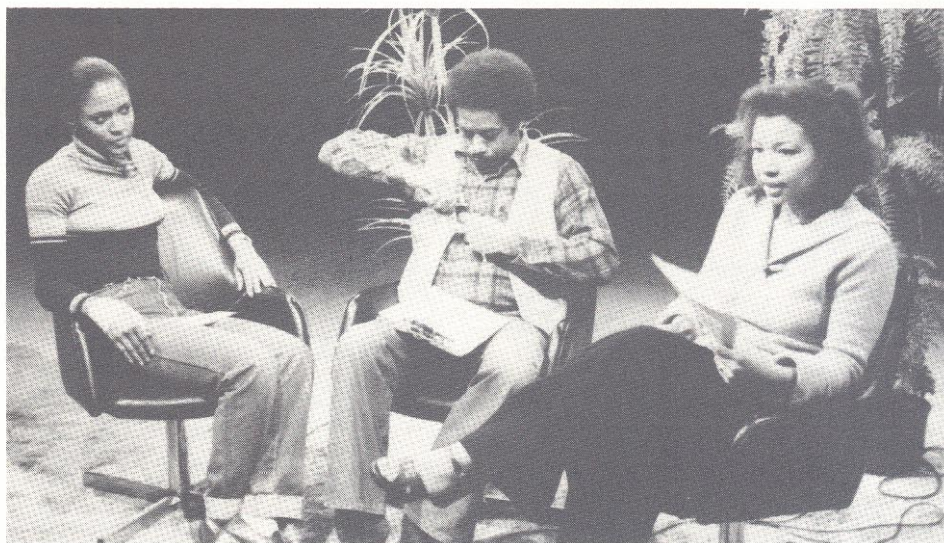


Krystel Fields at switcher, WKAR-TV

dancers, musicians, singers and mimes performing both popular and original material.

The drama segment started as an all-black soap opera. "Brothers and Sisters" was the first of its kind in Lansing and probably in the Midwest. It was a great challenge and lesson in acting, directing and set designing. When it folded in the following summer season it proved to be a good experience for us all. The segment then became Black Notes' Playhouse 80, and turned to dramatic readings, poetry, original television drama and excerpts from plays. Some of the presentations so far have been an adaption of Langston Hughes' "Tale of Simple," an original piece called "Night Moves" and readings from the works of poet Maya Angelou.

The key ingredient to our production is experience, the on-the-job training that is the essence of Black Notes. Being one of the crew means becoming a part at all phases of production. Producing, directing, lighting, audio or floor directing, no job is too big or too small to be mastered. Each crew member operates on a rotating schedule so as to let others get a chance to know all of the positions. This way the acting director



Host Larry Scott getting ready for show at WELM Public Access

comes to realize the importance of say, the floor director. Understanding the timing and communication involved in a production, a floor director or any person will learn to be more aware when they are on the other end of the headset.

Each individual finds the feelings of satisfaction that comes with teamwork. Members are involved in the production of each show. Meetings are held after every taping and each member is encouraged to make suggestions and help solve any problems that may come up. Due to one suggestion and to an increase in students' involvement, Black Notes has gained use of the studio facility of WKAR-TV, a local PBS station. Bob Burke, a staff producer/director with an interest in public access, oversees our productions and helps the crew any way he can. We have also recently achieved a bi-monthly slot on Michigan State University's Instructional Television cable system, giving Black Notes a voice to speak to the students attending MSU since National Cable is not available on the campus.

People who have been in Black Notes are all over the country applying their learned skills. In the Greater Lansing Area one goal of Black Notes is to reunite the relocated student with the surrounding community. By using students as the technical crew, and the community to get the issues, Black Notes is combining both as the unit of our show. By being involved in this way the students will be better able to cope with the issues in their own communities when they return from college life. Also the community receives knowledge of the public access system they can utilize in the future.

The ultimate, on-going goal is to get Blacks and other minorities into the media. Unfortunately there is very little media coverage dealing specifically with minorities and the little there is, well, is somewhat stereotypic. That does not say that this is intentional, but the established writers, directors, producers and camerapeople have a limited knowledge of the minority community. The fact that there's little minority presence or coverage unless there is a problem, a riot, or unemployment also implies that minorities only exist in that kind of environment. This could suggest indirectly that they are the problem. At Black Notes we are trying to destroy this phenomena.

We hope to present a more accurate, more positive viewpoint of the people and the community through their eyes and through their hearts.

Marsha Smith & Michael Lewis are members of Black Notes.



Women's Channels: Why, Where and for Whom?

by Marcia J. Boruta

Quietly, unknown to most of us women, a few women's cable channels have been popping up around the country. So, you may say, we finally did it. We have enough power to force the cable companies and our cities to give us a channel. The truth of the matter is, in most cases, women did not organize to get the channel. The women's channels were suggested by the cable companies. Ah! you might think, equality and justice have prevailed. The cable companies acknowledge the gross inequities in the relationship between women and media, and they are making amends.

Unfortunately, this is also not the case. Women's channels have developed for two very practical reasons: 1) increased channel capacity as a result of new cable technology, and, 2) advertising potential. With this information, it is much easier to deal realistically and creatively with the potential in a women's channel.

Women's channels have recently been awarded in Dallas, Boston, Austin, and Tucson. They are being bid in Denver and Queens. It seems likely that women's channels will be offered in Tampa, Baltimore, Chicago, and Sacramento. What these cities have in common is state-of-the-art cable technology. Newly franchised cities are getting wired with cable that can have a capacity of up to 108 channels.

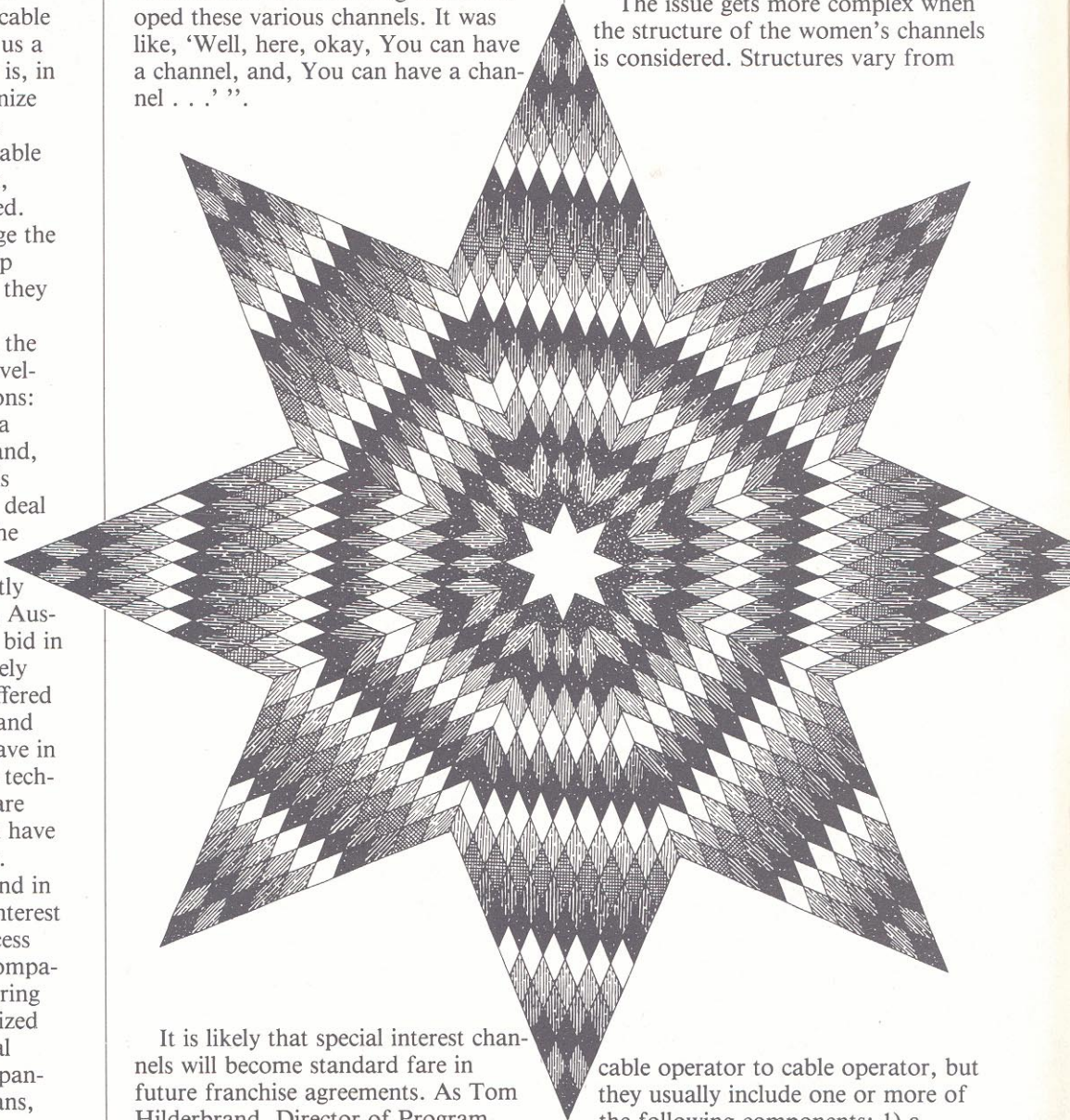
In response to this capacity, and in conjunction with the increased interest expressed by cities for public access provisions in franchises, cable companies have developed and are offering numerous access channels organized as "Theme channels" or "special interest channels." Women, Hispanics, Blacks, Senior Citizens, Asians, Handicapped, General Public Access Users, are all being allocated their own channels.

During franchising in Dallas, Tricia Dair organized a non-profit group to advocate community use of cable. As she describes it: "People here said, basically, that we want to be sure that we have channel space, but it was more an act of franchising that developed these various channels. It was like, 'Well, here, okay, You can have a channel, and, You can have a channel . . .'".

108 channel capacity) will go hand in hand, to pretty well assure that channels of this type will be in the offerings from now on."

Satellite Services

The issue gets more complex when the structure of the women's channels is considered. Structures vary from



It is likely that special interest channels will become standard fare in future franchise agreements. As Tom Hilderbrand, Director of Programming Services for Cox Cable in Tucson, sees it: "Large metropolitan areas are now being franchised, and, at the same time, the technology is to the point that 108 channels now are pretty much the common offering . . . I think those two (metropolitan size and

cable operator to cable operator, but they usually include one or more of the following components: 1) a national satellite service that carries "women's programming," 2) public access, 3) local origination, and, 4) potential lease access.

Dallas' channel is a public access channel with a national satellite service supplementing the programming. Bos-

ton has plans to carry a satellite service for four hours a day with local origination/public access material filling the rest of the time. Tucson has an access/local origination channel for women along with separate channels to carry satellite services offering women's programming.

With an eye to the future, and an awareness of the tenuous hold that access has had on the heartstrings/purse strings of the cable industry, it is essential to explore the role of the satellite program services in the development and future of women's channels and theme channels in general.

The union of advertisers' dollars and cable has culminated in the development of satellite fed program services. Satellite services aided in the development of theme channels, particularly women's channels, in that they provided a source of core programming around which a channel could be built. USA Network, Satellite Program Network, Modern Satellite Network, and ABC Video Enterprises in association with the Hearst Corporation, all offer blocks of programming that focus on a women's audience. They are also all advertiser supported services.

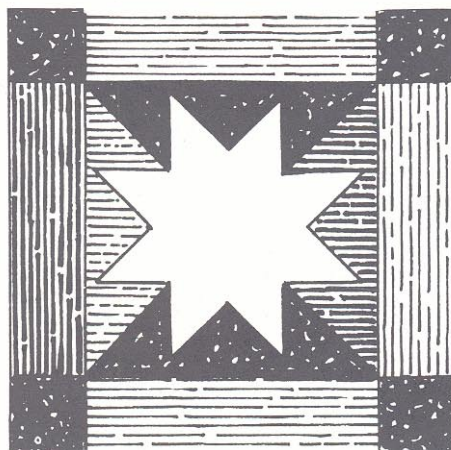
Theme Channels in the Marketplace

To back up a step, one of the natural effects of the theme channels was the automatic segmentation of the "market." If it could be assumed that women will watch women's programming and Blacks will watch programming particularly addressed to them, then it seemed possible for advertisers to reach a specific target audience by investing in programming that is intended to reach that audience. Theme channels provided an "addressability" that advertisers found appealing.

A cursory examination of the advertisers supporting the women's programming services includes Bristol-Myers, General Foods, Family Circle Magazine, Ralston-Purina, and Dupont. In short, "big money" is being put into the development of women's programming via the satellite services. Much more money than public access has to develop its share of the programming to fill a women's channel.

At present, local access for women is included in most of the women's channels that have been provided in new franchise agreements. So, what's the big deal? The future.

Anne Hall, franchise director for Warner-Amex during the Dallas negotiations, describes it this way: "If in two years, you can turn on the Dallas cable television system, and go through channels 1 through 24, which is where most of the access channels are, and you're going to see snow, then I would not blame the cable company, nor the subscriber, nor the city, if they removed that access designation on that channel and put different programming on it, which more than likely, unfortunately, will not be



locally originated. I think it's definitely a case that if the community doesn't use it, then it's going to be taken away. And I don't know if anyone should even try to combat that."

Most program services that offer women's programming are currently offering a limited number of hours a day, at present restricted essentially to daytime (soap opera) hours. Yet, the potential for expansion is there. USA Network is expanding its women's programming (USA Daytime) from approximately 2-1/2 hours a day to 8 hours as of April 1, 1982. ABC/Hearst's women's programming (also called Daytime) began on March 15, 1982, with four hours a day and possible expansion in the future. This potential for expansion could pose a threat to future access, particularly in

light of the financial structure of the satellite services and how they are bought by the cable operator.

Most satellite services are sold as an entire package. While the cable operator could choose to show only part of the package and supplement the rest of the channel with public access programming produced locally by women, it may not be to their advantage economically to do so. Not only would the cable operator be paying for a service that they only partially used, but they would also be losing additional advertising revenue by doing so.

The reason for this is that many satellite services offer "local avails"/"commercial avails" as well as carry national advertisers. "Local avails" are commercial spots in the satellite fed programming that are made available to the cable operator to sell to local advertisers and make local advertising money. Satellite services are expected to have significant subscriber appeal and thus be able to generate an audience of the size to make advertising appealing.

The potential for expansion translates into a lot of dollars from advertising, particularly with respect to women, whose role as consumer has historically been exploited by the marketplace.

Women's Organizations

The foregoing could be seen as dire predictions for the future of women's public access channels if it were not for the fact that women are organizing to address the development of women's channels in their communities. In some instances, this organization is self initiated by concerned women and women's groups in a city. In other cases, it is a curious by-product of the franchise agreement. Dallas, Texas, home of the first women's channel to begin operating, is a good place to begin an exploration of the women's channels and the diverse ways in which the women's community is getting involved.

Dallas' women's channel is primarily an access channel, with supplementary women's programming being provided by Warner-Amex via Modern Satellite Network. The franchise reads that access users have priority in terms of scheduling on the channel

and also have veto power over whether or not satellite programming would be carried on the channel.

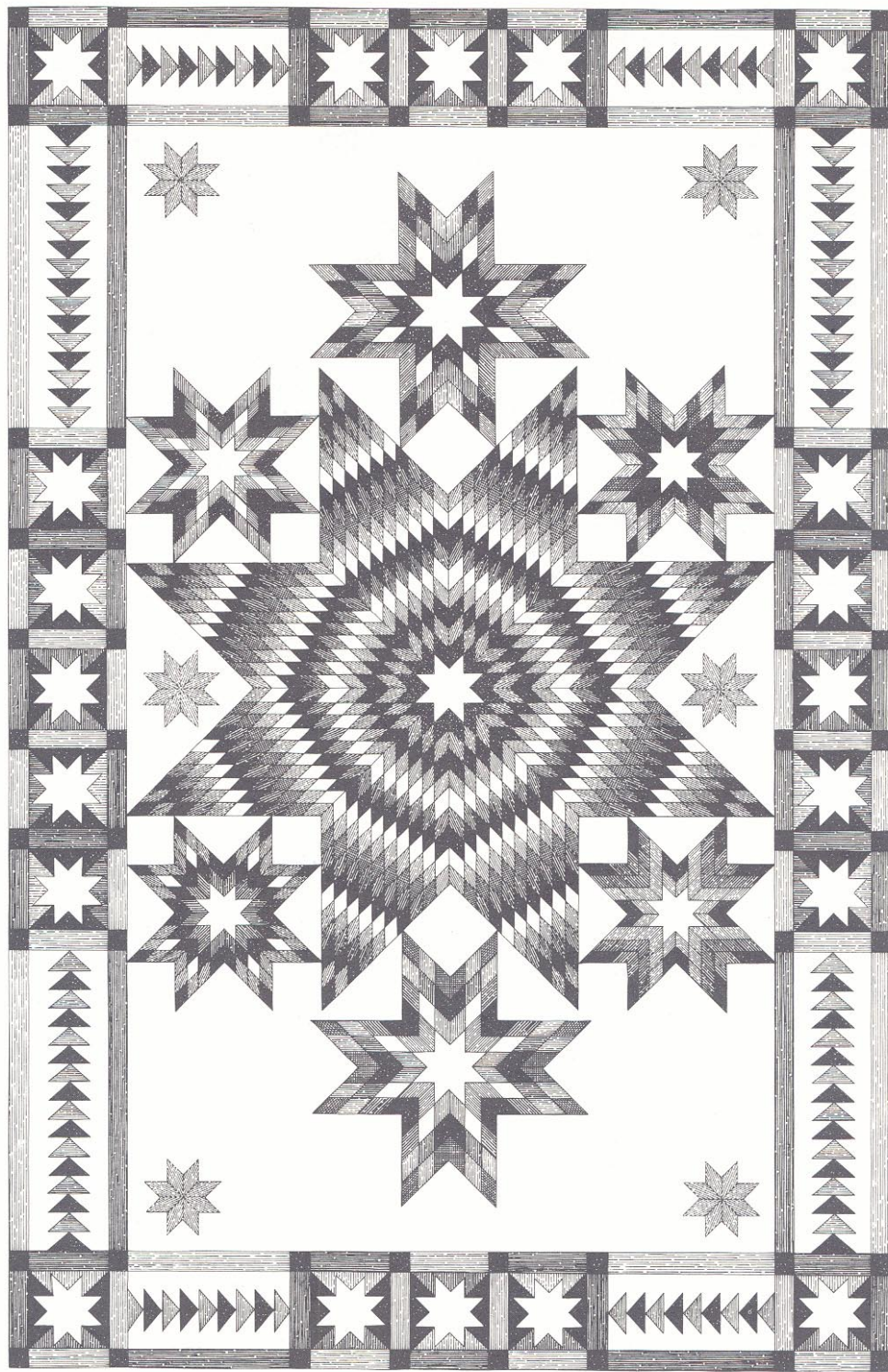
Anne Hall, former franchise director for Warner-Amex, recalls: "That was a touchy issue, but it shouldn't have been because the biggest problem is getting enough programming to fill that channel so that your audience grows accustomed to turning to that channel. If you've only got three hours of programming, you're much better off to put on complementary programming just to keep that audience interest up."

The franchise agreement also includes an option for channel redesignation. "We said," continues Hall, "that after the system reaches 50,000 subscribers, which should be about a year from now, then all of those access channels have twenty-four months to do some programming. If they don't do some programming, we put them on notice that, working with the Cable Television Advisory Board here in Dallas, which is a community based board, the cable company and the Board would have the option of redesignating the channel space for other kinds of programming. Frankly, if the cable company's trying to sell the service, you've got to give them some programming on that channel space."

While access users in general had organized in Dallas during the franchising process, women did not address in particular the issue of a women's channel. As Hall explains, "The women's organizations in Dallas never came to Warner-Amex and said, 'We want a channel.' However, when we were ascertaining the Dallas community before we prepared our proposal, there were enough women's groups who were very, very interested, individually, in programming for cable television. We could see, when we had to designate channel space, that they might be able to support a channel."

Outreach to Interest Groups

With a large number of special interest access channels to program, (Dallas also has channels dedicated to Blacks, Hispanics, Special Needs, Educational Access, etc.) Warner-Amex included in its proposal special provisions for access personnel.



"We divided the access staff in the proposal into two different categories," Hall explains, "one of the categories was technical support and training. The other category was what we called 'outreach specialists.' There are thirteen people on the Dallas system whose only job is to make sure the people in the community get hooked up successfully with the technical and programming support people. We were convinced that if there wasn't somebody out there selling public access it wasn't going to happen. I don't mean to imply that there's any lack of interest on the community's part, I just think that any successful venture has someone out there facilitating it. I think access is selling itself short if it doesn't make provisions for that function. And in Dallas we did."

The role that the "outreach specialists" will play in the development of a kind of "channel coalition" of women's groups and individual women remains to be seen.

Tricia Dair, currently an access staff member for Warner-Amex in Dallas, comments, "It's going to be very interesting in this city to see what occurs with the women's channel. There is no one group who, at this point, really embraces its use. . . . One of the first things that we did was to go to one of the women's groups that is pretty broadly representative. First, we told them what was available, and when they expressed interest, we asked them if they would help produce an access channel ID, rather than have us or someone else do it, in order to begin some definition of what the possibilities are. Now we're in the process of going group to group and helping them develop production skills. They already have ideas of what they want to do."

The Dallas system began cablecasting this January (1982), with a hook up to only 1000 homes. It is still in the early stages of development. However, access interest in general is high: 350 people have been trained in basic portapak use since September and another 350 are on the waiting list. Dallas merits watching as a prototype for the development of special interest channels. As Anne Hall summarizes, "If it doesn't happen here, it ain't gonna happen!"

Tucson

In Tucson, Cox Cable included a women's access/local origination channel in their winning bid. In addition, they plan to carry a satellite service offering women's programming on a separate channel. In Tucson, as in Dallas, the women's channel seems to be largely the cable operator's suggestion. Women's involvement will be solicited later by the cable operator.

"There haven't been, at this time, any direct negotiations with the women's community as such," says Tom Hilderbrand, Director of Programming Services. "That could be partly our fault, partly their fault. We are so new here, we haven't even put up the first piece of cable, so we're talking about quite a time period between now and when the channel becomes activated. . . . We will be pursuing different groups to become involved in these numerous channels because of the fact we have such a channel capacity. Besides the women's channel, there are so many channels that have been dedicated to different organizations and access and groups that we think that we will have to become very active in the pursuit and creation, in some instances, of groups who will program these channels."

Austin

Community organization is progressing from a different direction in Austin. Austin is unique in this process in that it has had cable and public access for ten years. However, the franchise recently changed hands to Austin Cablevision (owned by ATC), with the subsequent inclusion of a women's channel in the proposed channel line-up. A coalition of women organized to discuss what to do with the channel. Through the Women's Center of Austin, they applied for and received a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, to conduct a financial ascertainment with respect to a women's channel for Austin.

Paul Smolen, Vice President of Tele-Techniques in Austin, is serving as a consultant for the ascertainment project. He describes the steps to be taken: "The first thing is to get together print, video, and computer program material that would be of interest as examples and models for future women's programming. The

second step is to hold a workshop for about 150 directors and managers of women's issue-related organizations in Austin and to provide information at a morning session that would allow them to get the initial decision making down as to what kind of things they want to pursue in an afternoon planning session.

"They would form panels that would consist of different interest groups, like, there might be a religious panel, there might be a human services panel, or there would be a business panel. Different types of panels would get together, as this first coalition breaks things down, and decide on, for instance, what kinds of religious programming women want or business programming they want. They would do that from an organizational viewpoint, as being directors and sort of knowing from past experience what they feel the women of Austin want. They would put that down, at first, on paper, in an organized manner that could be collated and put together in sort of a potpourri of programming that the directors want to produce."

Smolen continues, "The next step is the validation step you might say, or the check step, to actually involve the women of Austin in a televised survey of what kind of programming they do desire. We're going to try to provide a taped summary of the earlier workshop, and in the second half of the program, we'll be actually walking through the questionnaire getting people to submit their answers. After we get the questionnaires back, we'll do some cross comparisons with what the directors thought people wanted and then present that back to the coalition for re-prioritizing. At that point, they will decide what their goals are for the first year of community programming for the city of Austin as far as their group is concerned."

Boston Group Organizes

In Boston, women are also organizing to address women's access. In June, 1981, an ad hoc group of women in media sent out a letter to various women's groups in the area announcing the formation of the Women's Access Committee.

As Catherine Russo, a member of the committee, describes it: "The

Women's Access Committee has now been meeting for almost a year, since last March. There are about thirty members who meet, representing a larger coalition of grassroots women's groups in the city. We sent out mailings keeping women informed of what's happening with Cablevision and women's programming. We just sent out a survey to 100 different women's groups. We're trying to get an idea of who's interested in doing programming and what types of programming."

Cablevision's women's channel would include the ABC/Hearst satellite service for four hours of programming per day. Catherine Russo is interested in supplementing that programming with local origination programming. "I think what's exciting about Boston is that, you have ABC/Hearst and you have some women's programming coming out of the Midwest, but there's nothing in the country that a company could be excited about the possibility of making profits from. I think that there could be an alternative type of women's programming coming out of Boston, because there is so much alternative stuff happening here. They could possibly sell it to other parts of the country."

Looking into the future, she continues, "One of the things is, as the group grows, we're getting a lot more women from the greater Boston area, Cambridge, Somerville, Arlington, other places that have a big women's community, that are interested in women's programming. So we're turning out to be not just a Boston group, but a Greater Boston group. We may eventually be able to go to different program managers and convince them to do more women's programming, or hire women to do programming, or be open to better women's programming."

"At some point, when we feel strong enough, we're open to suggesting new ways of doing things to Cablevision, because they have to fill an awful lot of channels to begin with. If we could make some special arrangement with them to lease a channel cheaply, and be able to rent their equipment, the local origination equipment, at a minimal cost, and then find our own sponsors, we could



probably give many more people a share of the jobs, and a share of the money that we bring in, much more than local origination could."

The Future

This brings us to the future. So, what does all this mean? Essentially, two things. First, that there are some women's channels in the country with varying amounts of access time available on them. And, second, we may only have two or three years to see what we can do with them, both locally and nationally.

We need to do some brainstorming. It's not hard to envision the potential. Local programming. Local programming exchanged regionally, nationally. A network? Teleconferencing? A women's teletext news service? What is WOMEN'S programming? Is it a focus (on children, clothes or cooking)? Or is it a perspective (women's perspectives on defense, on the media, on art or music).

We need to consider the economic structure of the cable industry as we ascertain our needs and potential, both as producers and as the audience.

And, finally, it is essential that women get involved as early as possible in franchise negotiations in their cities, in order to insure good public access provisions, and to exert as much control as possible over the development of a women's channel.

At present, equipment, training, and particularly air time, are being offered in unprecedented amounts in the form of women's channels. How can we use these resources in a way most beneficial to women?

Keep in Mind

In order to insure that women's needs are adequately served by the developing women's channels, special consideration needs to be given to the channel structures that have developed so far.

Some women's channels are strictly access channels. They have the advantage of being programmed by the community and therefore should be most reflective of the community's needs. Good access provisions and community outreach are essential to the success of the channel. However, the amount of work entailed in programming an entire channel has been well documented by access efforts over the past years. In response to this, some cable operators are supplementing access programming with advertiser-supported "women's programming" from satellite services.

The rationale behind this supplementation is to build an audience by keeping the channel programmed as many hours as possible. The question arises however, will the channel identification as an access channel be hampered by the inclusion of commercial-quality programming? A second concern is maintaining the access designation of a composite channel. The satellite services offering "women's programming" have indicated plans to expand their programming hours. As advertiser-supported services, they are relatively cheap sources of programming for cable operators. In consideration of this, it is essential that access users retain priority in terms of scheduling on the channel and that the channel be retained as an access channel.

Another type of women's channel provides only the "women's programming" offered by the satellite services. As advertiser-supported programming, it brings forth, once again, the questions addressing the affect of advertising on program content. Which women are being addressed? White? Middle-class? Ages 25 to 49? What topics are and are not being covered?

With community cooperation, assessment, and imaginative effort, a women's channel that truly serves the needs of a community can be created.

Marcia J. Boruta is a member of the Women's Cable Television Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse was formed in April, 1981, to facilitate the pursuit of locally operated and controlled women's channels on cable. For further information, or to do some brainstorming, contact: Women's Cable Television Clearinghouse c/o Marcia J. Boruta, 237 Spruce St. #10, San Diego, CA 92103.

Access for Handicappers

Programming for People Like You and Me.

by Susan Bednarczyk

“**T**o work successfully with us on access programming, you’ve got to treat us just like anybody else,” relayed dwarf Len Sawisch of the Center of Handicapper Affairs of East Lansing.

“Two of the biggest obstacles we handicappers face are either the public’s notion that we are somehow more noble because we live with affliction, or the public’s idea that misshapen people are somewhat evil.” Len cited Walt Disney cartoons and other animation imagery as one of the greatest image problems that he and others he knows have had to counter.

“Do you know how many times I get asked about Snow White? It’s really important that I and other handicappers have a vehicle such as public access to help realign the image handicappers have of themselves and the public has of them.”

“Handicapper” is an active connotation used extensively in East Lansing and the vicinity by this group. Len described the purpose and growth of the Center’s regular access program “We All Live Here,” which is made by and for handicappers. Len described its change from the days of one-portapak coverage (an all-but-impossible technical situation with which to reach a deaf viewer) to the more complex current productions.

He noted that some handicappers, such as those in wheelchairs, have a built-in advantage in mobile camera situations, and urged other handicappers to make full use of their abilities in production situations at other access centers.

Len noted that technical quality of “We All Live Here” is secondary to the prime purposes of the weekly show — to provide information to the audience, to provide a forum for discussion of the special problems and pressures of handicappers, and to be a



network of communications among the local handicapper groups and associations.

A side benefit, he pointed out, was that through a show dealing with all branches of the handicapper community in the area, many formal organizations began working more effectively on non-cable projects. Some recent favorite program topics were on special appliances for handicappers and beauty, good grooming, and fashion tips from professionals. Len said that viewers familiar with the show have come to the Center to become involved in TV as producers, technicians, and writers.

Though ratings fall short of describing the total success of the show, he noted a 6%-9% audience share occasionally, a 4%-6% share monthly, and a very healthy viewership each week from area cable subscribers.

Marjorie Thurston of Manhattan Cable TV energetically describes her approach to this special audience. Her three-part plan is to advertise the cable showing of a special film and supporting programming as a “TV event,” assemble pre-existing series of video tapes and films for handicappers, and gradually begin original and on-going local programming.

Marjorie gives us numerous leads on programs available for free from many sources with which to get the ball rolling in any community.

“Don’t put handicapper programming on a special channel,” she urged, “Share the programs with the access, leased and local origination channels on the system. Repeat all of the shows frequently, and integrate them across the board. This is most important.”

One local program currently produced on Manhattan Cable which Marjorie feels is popular is “Grab-A-Chair,” an exercise program for chair-bound viewers. As per her “integration” suggestion, Marjorie noted that this can and should be viewed by anyone chair-bound — senior citizens, handicappers, and any one who is unable to move around too much.

Marjorie has also requested that access programmers consider the needs of handicappers in all their productions, and the result is that some have added captions and inserts for the deaf, as well as other sign language interpreters.

Randy Feldman of UA-Columbia Cablevision in Oakland, New Jersey, spoke about his system’s cooperation with the Handicast project of New York University. (See “Handicapped Learn to Produce Television for the Handicapped,” *Community Television Review*, Jan. 1980).

Randy noted its success by citing jobs in the broadcast industry that are now being filled by television trainees from this innovative project.

Susan Bednarczyk is a Contributing Editor of CTR.

National Federation of Local Cable Programmers Equal

The National Federation of Local Cable Programmers (NFLCP) is committed to a policy of Equal Opportunity and non-discrimination based on sex, race, creed, national origin, color, handicap, age and sexual preference.

The NFLCP strives to ensure a policy of Equal Opportunity in all its activities including membership, employment, delivery of services, meetings, training, contracting of services, goods and equipment and on boards and committees. This policy shall be implemented via a program of Affirmative Action both nationally and regionally to address all areas of operation within the organization. The NFLCP shall adapt specific goals and time tables to implement an Affirmative Action Program for the inclusion of those federally protected groups that have been under-represented in the following areas:

- a. Membership
- b. Employment
- c. Boards and Committees
- d. Conference seminars and meetings
- e. Consultants, contracts and delivery of services

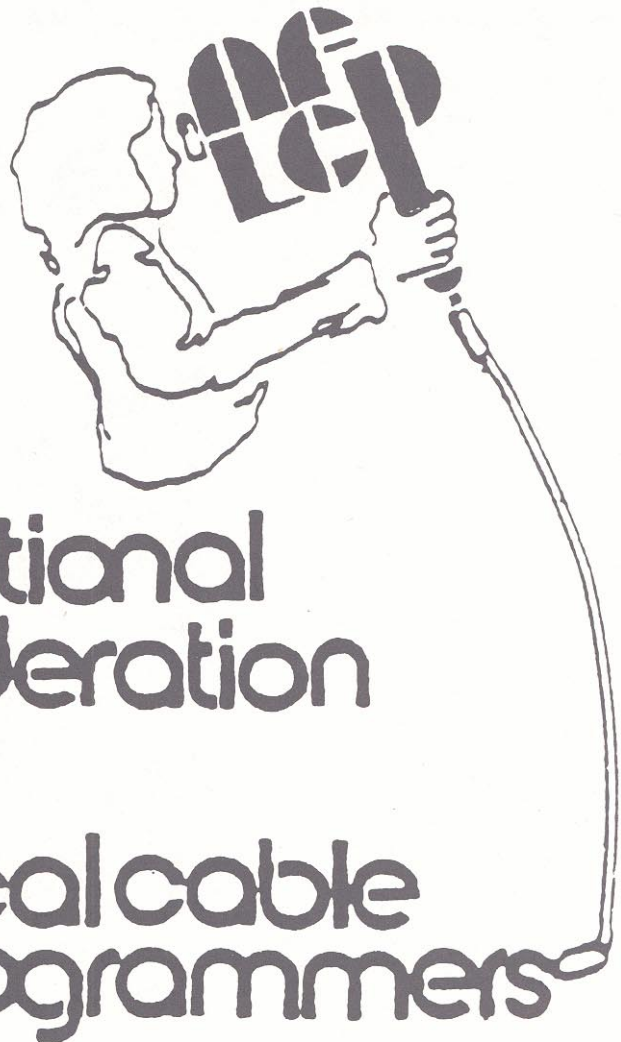
The responsibility for implementation of a National Affirmative Action Plan shall be the NFLCP Board of Directors with the Affirmative Action Committee (AAC) responsible for monitoring the Plan.

Each NFLCP Regional Chapter shall implement and designate a Regional Affirmative Action Representative to implement and monitor its Affirmative Action Program. Regional Representatives shall report to the National Affirmative Action Committee Chairperson.

Affirmative Action Plan

The NFLCP Affirmative Action program addresses the following areas:

1. Setting Policy
2. Conference Facilities and Speakers
3. Committee and Boards
4. Employment



5. Contracts, Consultant and Delivery of Services
6. Economic and Financial Assistance
7. Training and Education

Emphasis should be on:

- Racial minorities i.e. Black Hispanic, Native Americans, Asians/Oriental
- Physical Handicap as it relates to programming, training services and site locations
- Gender, is to be considered in areas of operations where there has traditionally been an under-utilization of females
- Age is to be considered in affirmatively including persons in programming and training.

The National Federation of Local Cable Programmers goal is to achieve the following actions within each area.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY

1. Recruitment
Advertising Contact with minority participation, colleges, national and local media and community organizations.
2. A standard and/or minimum number of days should be set for the length of time jobs will remain posted in order to give equal opportunity for everyone to apply.
3. Application forms and interviews will be free of biased questions i.e. marital status, number of children, etc.

Opportunity/Affirmative Action Policy

4. Hiring qualifications will be job-related with direct job experiences or related/similar experiences substitutions.
5. Job related evaluation format should be set up for all paid staff positions.
6. Equal pay for equal worth policy for all paid staff positions.
7. Goals and timetables developed for all paid positions based on anticipated staff increase and workforce availability.

MEMBERSHIP

1. Joint membership with minorities media organizations and Minorities in Cable.
2. Notes and invitations to join NFLCP will be sent to all major minority universities and minority advocacy organizations, sororities, fraternities and minorities communication groups.
3. NFLCP will have a representative at major minorities conferences. Wherever possible, that representative will supply literature.
4. NFLCP should make every effort to provide minorities role models as speakers, coordinators and as membership recruiters to encourage minority participation.

BOARDS & COMMITTEES & MEETINGS

1. National & Regional Boards & Committees should include minority representatives.
2. Regional Boards should seek out local minority media and community organization or persons to aid in the recruitment of minority resources.
3. Regional Board should set goals and create a plan tailored to its region to include minorities and handicapped persons.
4. The sites of all meetings should be accessible to the handicapped.

CONFERENCE, SEMINARS, MEETINGS

- A. Conferences, seminars and meetings should be accessible to handicapped persons.

- B. Conference literature to offer reasonable accommodations for the handicapped, i.e. readers for visually impaired.
- C. Financial scholarships should be provided for low income and/or student status with emphasis on minorities.
- D. Conference coordinators should be responsible for:
 - a. P.R. literature containing provisions for handicapped.
 - b. Contact the minority media resources organizations (both locally & nationally).
 - c. Recruit minorities on conference committees and work crews.
 - d. Seek out minorities and women-owned businesses for contracting services.
 - e. Conferences and seminars should set a goal to include minorities as speakers on various panels.
 - f. The National Board and its staff offices, when asked, should consider minority and women's names.

EXTERNAL PLAN OF ACTION TO PROMOTE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN WITHIN THE CABLE INDUSTRY TO ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING AREAS.

1. Franchising
2. Construction
3. Operations, Marketing, Access Programming
4. Employment
5. Contracting

RESOURCE INFORMATION

Definitions

Minority: The term as defined by the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to include:

White — Not of Hispanic origin. Persons having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.

original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.

Hispanic — Persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

Black — not of Hispanic origin — persons having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

Asian or Pacific Islander — Persons having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian sub-continent, or the Pacific Islands.

American Indian or Alaskan Native — Persons having origins in any of the original peoples of North America and who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or affiliation or community recognition.

The Handicap: A handicapped person is anyone who:

- (1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of his/her major life activities
- (2) Has a record of such an impairment
- (3) Is regarded as having such an impairment.

"Substantially limits . . ."

This has to do with the degree of disability. A handicapped person having a hard time getting a job or getting ahead on a job because of a disability would be considered "substantially limited."

"Major life activities . . ." These include communication, ambulation, self-care, socialization, education, transportation and employment.

"Reasonable Accommodation" means making necessary adaptations to enable a qualified handicapped:

- (1) Making facilities used by all employees accessible to handicapped people (ramps, restrooms, adaptations, wider aisles, etc.).
- (2) Making modifications in jobs, work schedules, equipment or work areas.



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Black Participation in Telecommunications: Guidelines for Right Now!

by Jabari Simama, Ph.D.

Television plays a major role today in socializing the black community. Some argue that television, in many instances, has a greater impact on the consciousness of black youth than do parents. If this is true, it requires a reexamination of our basic patterns of socialization. Further, it requires that special efforts be made by the black community to ensure that it participates on all levels in the communication industries.

Programmers and owners of broadcast industries have not provided many opportunities for black participation. Not only are there no major networks owned by blacks, there are few opportunities for blacks to produce images and send messages of relevance to their community and the nation at large. In the world today it is imperative that blacks have access to a communication system. Without a communication system they do not have the ability to prioritize, define and exchange significant information at the national or local levels.

While few opportunities for blacks exist in media today, blacks must move rapidly to take full advantage of those which are present before they vanish. Opportunities still exist in cable TV in the areas of ownership, engineering, construction, programming, and management, among others. However, the opportunities in these areas will exist for only another two to three years because within that period all the major urban markets will be franchised. If blacks don't become involved in cable now, there may not be a future for them in this industry.

The cable industry is by no stretch of imagination a war on poverty. In fact, it is one of the most competitive new industries today. Cable television (CATV), which stands for Community Antennae Television, was devel-

oped in the late 1940's. Back then, it was generally associated with communities unable to receive TV signals because of terrain or proximity from TV station problems. In the decades to follow we witnessed the growth of cable from a few thousand subscribers to more than 15 million.

Franchising

It is during the franchising stage when the black community can help shape the final cable agreement to meet its needs. In cities where blacks comprise a significant percentage of the total population, a rationale for their involvement might be that their tax dollars maintain the right-of-ways that cable operators must utilize to wire the lucrative urban markets.

Through involvement in franchising, the black community can help determine the type of programming that will be offered, the number of access production studios that will be available, the rates the cable company will charge, the number of blacks and other minorities hired, and the per-

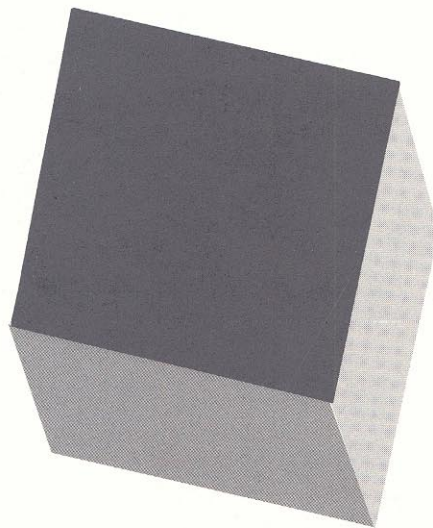
centage of black or local ownership, just to name a few areas. The cable franchising game is extremely political; therefore, blacks who choose to become involved must prepare for a tough and, at times, vehement battle.

Ownership

In areas where blacks comprise a significant percentage of the population, black ownership should be pursued with some vigor. Black ownership is important for more reasons than racial percentages — it is important because the dominant mass media have fostered negative images of the black experience and have failed to present the multidimensionality of black life. This has made all the more difficult the development of identity and dignity in the black community. Further, it has hampered the free flow of information which serves as a basis for an appreciation of diversity and a greater understanding of freedom for all Americans.

Many blacks believe that black ownership will result in greater programming opportunities for black producers. While this has yet to be established from the few examples of black ownership that presently exist, it is definitely too soon to dismiss this possibility. Nevertheless, black ownership must not be seen as a "cure-all" for every problem blacks face in the industry. Black ownership can be important if it is controlled by and accountable to the black community.

This type of accountability might come with some alternative form of ownership. Two alternative forms of ownership that might hold relevance for the black community are cooperative ownership, where fifty or more individuals and/or community based organizations cooperatively own or operate a cable system, and municipal ownership, where the city owns and operates the cable system. There is



considerable capital commitment in all forms of ownership, but the economic and social returns of a successfully run cable system promise to be even greater in the new urban frontiers. There are examples of both types being run successfully in nearly twenty communities.

Employment

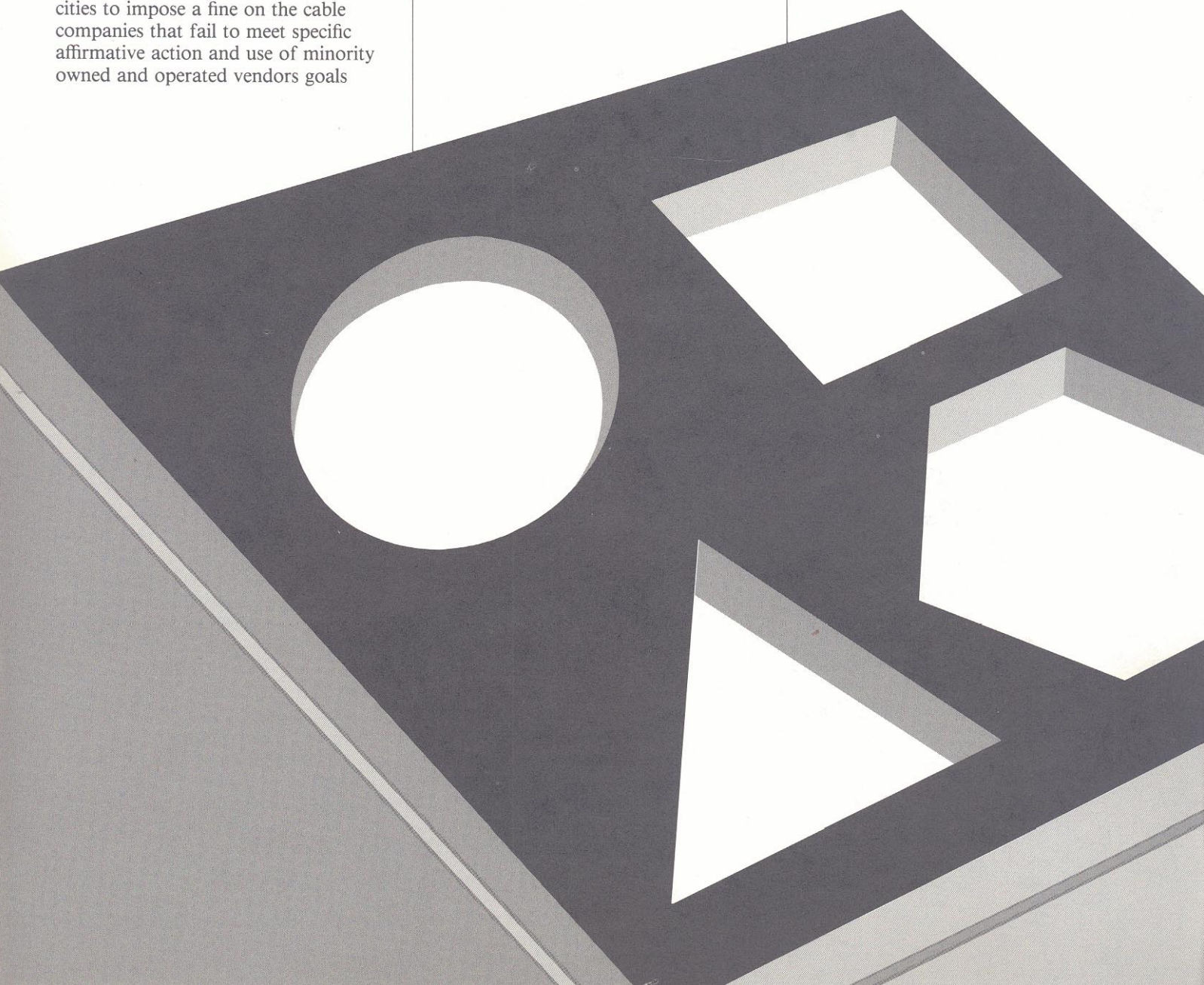
If accountable ownership is important for black participation, black employment is near equal importance. Many black interest groups are advocating that cities require by ordinance 20 to 30 percent black and minority employment as a condition for granting a franchise. Effective minority compliance agreements often mandate that minorities be represented throughout all levels of the cable corporate structure. A provision allowing cities to impose a fine on the cable companies that fail to meet specific affirmative action and use of minority owned and operated vendors goals

and timetables is often written into city contracts as well.

Many cable operators claim that minorities lack adequate training in the specialized areas of cable. Yet, cable, like many other industries, must offer special on-the-job training opportunities for blacks who are eager to learn new skills and/or adapt old ones to new situations. Many areas in cable don't require specific knowledge as much as an aptitude for sales or, perhaps, a high level of self esteem and motivation. Such opportunities exist in the areas of programming, both technical and administrative; marketing, both sales and advertising; public affairs and promotions; corporate law; accounting; area processing; installation and construction; and many others.

Training and Community Development

In addition to urging that franchise agreements provide for in-house training in the aforementioned areas, blacks might advocate that these agreements require cable operators to form links with black colleges and other black institutions that provide training in cable related areas. Such linkage agreements could stipulate that cable companies strengthen existing training programs at historically black colleges, help finance and establish new ones, grant release time to their staff members who desire to teach in cable training programs at black colleges, and provide equipment and other needed supplies. If cable companies are willing to cooperate with local



institutions to this degree, then the cities will surely benefit from cable, and cable companies will benefit in terms of good community and public relations. But again, the stakes are very high; issues such as training and community development should be part of the political process of franchising and ultimately part of the franchise agreement.

Black & Small Business Opportunities

In addition to asking that cable companies provide opportunities in employment for minorities and form links with black institutions, blacks might advocate that the companies do 20-25 percent of their purchasing with minority owned/or controlled businesses. The black community might also urge the cable companies to create a contract compliance office with an officer trained to locate minority vendors, both local and national, and help black and other minority vendors get started in cable-related fields.

Programming

Another critical area for the black community is programming. Most cable companies today are building 400 megahertz, fifty-plus subscriber systems which will provide as many as forty-five channels to subscribers for as little as eight dollars a month. This hodgepodge of basic programming does not include popular pay services such as Home Box Office or the Movie Channel. Programs in this category range from alpha-numeric data based channels, offering data information on the stock market, the weather, and cost comparison of products, to a Black Entertainment Network (BET), an all Spanish Network, and a Children's Programming Network.

Because most alpha-numeric channels are programmed locally, blacks and other minorities might ask that a channel be allocated for their use exclusively. On their channel they might program survival information of relevance on a 24 hour a day basis. Free training in the use of the alpha-numeric keyboards and donation of the necessary equipment and technology could also be a part of the request.

Local Origination

Local Origination (LO) programming is programming originated locally by the cable operator. This area of programming is of critical importance to the black community because it provides opportunities for black inde-

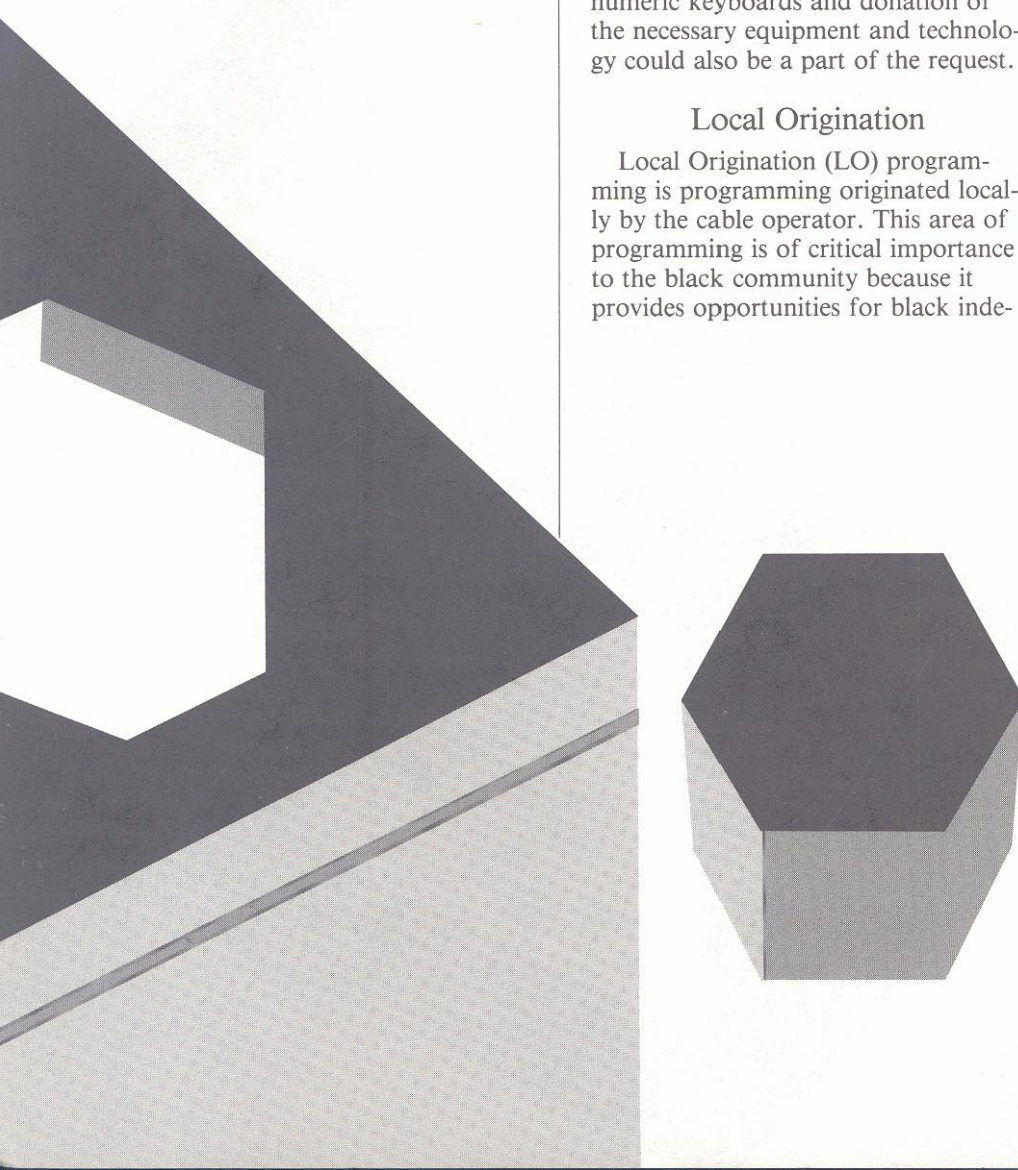
pendent producers to serve their communities by joint-venturing with cable companies to produce relevant programming. LO might provide opportunities for locally produced black programming to be distributed on a regional and national level as well.

Public Access

Public access or community access television is community produced programming. It has potential to narrow-cast and demystify the medium of television. It is non-elitist and egalitarian. Through encouraging citizen participation, public access helps foster the self discovery within the creative process. Herein lies the key which distinguishes access programming from other forms of local television: access programming encourages and, in fact, requires citizen participation.

Blacks must familiarize themselves quickly with critical issues in access and make sure that the black community is in a position to take full advantage of opportunities as they become available. Access is more than community originated programming. It also includes channels made available to the community for its exclusive use, neighborhood studios equipped with studio and location equipment, and a comprehensive training program to provide ordinary people with hands-on experience in television production techniques. Cities are now requiring separate components of access which include public, government, educational and leased access.

The black community should pay close attention to several important areas in access and make sure that provisions for these are part of the franchise agreement. These areas include (1) staffing, (2) facilities, (3) equipment, (4) channels, (5) programming. Cities often asked for about one access center per 50,000 residents. Therefore, a city of 500,000 might request the construction of ten neighborhood access studios. The black community ought to be heavily involved in the location of the studios to ensure that they are located in areas where they will have the greatest impact. In addition, because location production is the heart of access programming, blacks might ask that cities require one mobile access van per 100,000 residents.

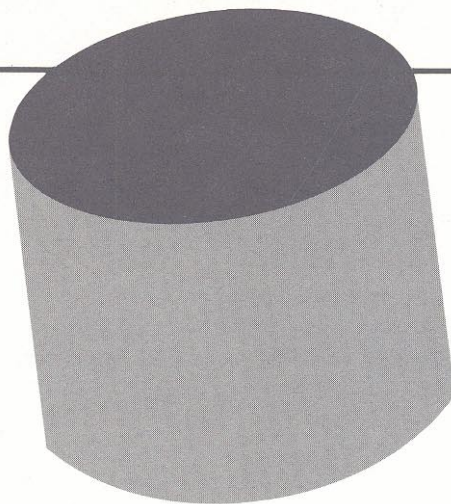


Black groups might urge city officials to try to get as many access channels as possible, but it is not uncommon for cable operators to offer as many as twelve different access channels for a population of 500,000 people.

All access should be available to the public, free of charge, on a first-come first-served basis. This includes access to all facilities, the vans, and channel time. In areas where non-profit groups have run access operations successfully, independent of cable companies, some consideration might be given to having these organizations run access as a non-profit corporation if they represent a wide cross-section of the city residents and have had a history of community service. If no such organization exists, the black community might be better served by having the cable company run access in conjunction with the city's office of telecommunication until such time as access has become successful. Generally speaking, three years is long enough to determine whether or not an operation will be successful. If access is successful, at the end of three years it might be separated from the city and the cable company and run by a non-profit community corporation. This might be necessary for access to become truly a community institution. Cable companies might be required to fund access for as long as they own the franchise and to commit 2% of their gross revenues in addition to \$500,000 annually to operate access.

Government Access

Government access channels are often programmed by either the city, the cable operator, a non-profit access organization, or some combination of the above. Live coverage of city council and other local government meetings are typical programs on this channel. Although studies show that the public's access to the local city meetings via cable has resulted in more open meetings and even more accountable public officials, some local officials still are not thrilled over the notion that now their actions, or lack thereof, will be subject to greater public scrutiny as a result of the video tapings.



Educational Access

Educational access also provides unique opportunities for the black community. Often channels are given to local institutions who plan to use cable for instructional and informational purposes. Both data and video material are often transmitted over the educational as well as the other access channels. In Atlanta, Atlanta University is exploring how cable might be used in its Management Information System (MIS). In the major urban areas, cable operators typically provide three or more channels for educational access users. Historically, black educational institutions, which have played a unique role in educating black students, might try to acquire a channel to utilize the resources of the institution for community programming. Imagine the impact upon black group consciousness if such great thinkers as W.E.B. DuBois or James Weldon Johnson had been afforded wider public access!

Leased Access

Leased access should provide new exposure and opportunities for black producers and entrepreneurs. Time can be purchased on a separate channel set aside for this purpose at rates usually below the market. Producers leasing time on this channel would not be prohibited from advertising and fundraising as they are on public, educational, and government access. Black entrepreneurs should be able to sponsor programming on this channel at rates lower than radio time.

Some access producers see leased access as a necessary interim step toward the acquisition of satellite time. For example, the "David Green Show" is currently seen in forty-nine states. Green began his show on Manhattan Cable's public access channel. A year later, he moved to the system's leased access channel, and soon afterwards purchased SPN Satellite time. Not all black producers can expect to do what Green did. However, there are enough examples to confirm that leased access will be a new method of distribution for eager black producers.

Conclusion

In closing, one might gather from reading this article that the areas where blacks might choose to impact cable are as massive as the cable industry itself. I would not be one to argue the contrary. In short, blacks and other minorities should learn as much about cable and the related technologies as is possible.

It is indeed disappointing to hear talk from black cable system owners that they might sell their systems if offered the right price. Addressing this complex issue within the black community won't be easy for it involves a number of factors that relate to questions of privacy and freedom of choice.

Yet, the real issue surrounding freedom of choice and privacy concerns the extent to which people will have choices to competing voices, quality information, and alternative programming. In the future, the battle for information might be as important as the battle for food, clothing, and/or shelter. Communications is important to many blacks because they believe that the one who controls the images and information also controls the human mind. The battle for the black mind, to some, is seen as a battle for black liberation. To paraphrase an old black colloquialism — "free one's mind and one's body will follow." Herein lies the real significance of black involvement in cable and/or any other communications related industry.

Jabari Simama is Director of Public Access for Cable Atlanta, Inc.

Uplink/Downlink



Boston Community Access and Programming Foundation: What Lies Ahead?

by Rob McCausland

Readers of last July's CTR and others who have followed the Boston process will recall that Mayor Kevin H. White's Request for Proposals was a rather unique gambit, calling for a nonprofit public and institutional access corporation (then yet to be designed) to be supported by 5% of the operator's gross annual revenues. The Boston RFP reduced the field of nine initial applicants to only two — Warner Amex and Cablevision Systems of Woodbury, New York.

On August 12, 1981, Mayor White awarded the franchise to Cablevision. CTR's readers, however, will be most interested in the community programming component. The bold Boston experiment — all local access under one nonprofit roof — now rests with the access corporation. On March 24 of this year this corporation was formally constituted, now known as the the Boston Community Access and Programming Foundation. What is it, how did we get it, and who exactly are the "we" that have it?

Throughout most of 1981 the Mayor's Office of Cable Communications conceived of community programming as being produced by four broad community sectors: 1) educational; 2) health care; 3) arts and cultural; and 4) public access. (Municipal programming would be produced by the City and evidently would be outside of the corporation's responsibilities). Each of these sectors, the City's Cable Office theorized, would elect a set of directors to the corporation's board.

The Cable Office's consistent conceptualizing along these sector lines quite naturally resulted in the formation of sector-based consortia to 1) influence and expedite the development of the access corporation, and 2) act as liaisons between those sectors' constituents and the corporation once it was formed.

Of the original four City-suggested sectors, one, the arts and cultural sector, met briefly in the spring of 1981 and has not been heard from since. The other three sector consortia are going strong. The health care group is known as the Boston Health Care Cable Consortium. It is the most organized, being the only one of the three currently incorporated. It has been meeting since spring of 1981, and its President is Michael Brown, Director of the Educational Media Center at Tufts New England Medical Center.

The educational sector is organized as the City of Boston Educational Consortium for Cable TV, and has also been meeting since last spring. Until recently it has been chaired by Daniel J. Finn, Vice President for University Relations at Boston University. Though a steering committee was to have been formed, the Consortium has as yet developed no infra-structure, and has not considered incorporating. Throughout the year, the members (various colleges, universities, and schools) have toured each others' facilities.

The public access sector, organized last summer with the help of the Cable Television Access Coalition, is known as Boston Community Television (BCTV). It is currently developing by-laws and intends to incorporate. BCTV has been holding

workshops in the neighborhoods and has quickly been gaining members. Like many grass-roots organizations, however, its development has been constrained by a lack of funds. BCTV's provisional chair is Margaret-Ellen Harkins a long-time Boston community organizer.

Since the franchise was awarded last August, target dates for signing the provisional license and establishing the access corporation have come and gone — September, October, November, December, January. Please understand and be patient, the Cable Office explained; this is a stunningly complex process. That was easy enough to believe, though one had to accept it on faith, because at this point all the planning went behind closed doors — not just the contract negotiations between the City and Cablevision, which would be understandable, but also the development process of the access corporation.

What was actually taking place became apparent only slowly. Back in December, 1980, when the Mayor's Cable Access Advisory Committee recommended the nonprofit access corporation, it had also recommended the formation of a Working Committee to consider how to establish such a beast. The Mayor never responded to the Committee's specific recommendations (though he did of course include the general access corporation concept in his RFP). By late summer the City's Cable Office, under the direction of Richard Borten, was ready to quietly establish such a Working Committee. That was the first idea that was mysteriously killed.

The next surprise came over the issue of elected representatives on the corporation's board of directors — all along favorably considered by the City's Cable Office. By September it was clear that the Mayor intended to appoint all the directors. When Marylou Batt of the Cable Office addressed an October meeting of Boston Community Television, she was confronted by the built-up outrage of angry citizens. Why can't public access be administered autonomously? Why can't it have its own elected representatives? All she could say was "We're open to your suggestions."

Likewise, when Cable Coordinator Borten met with 19 members of Boston Community Television at City Hall in November, he acknowledged their concerns, saying that he had and would continue to pass those concerns along to the Mayor.

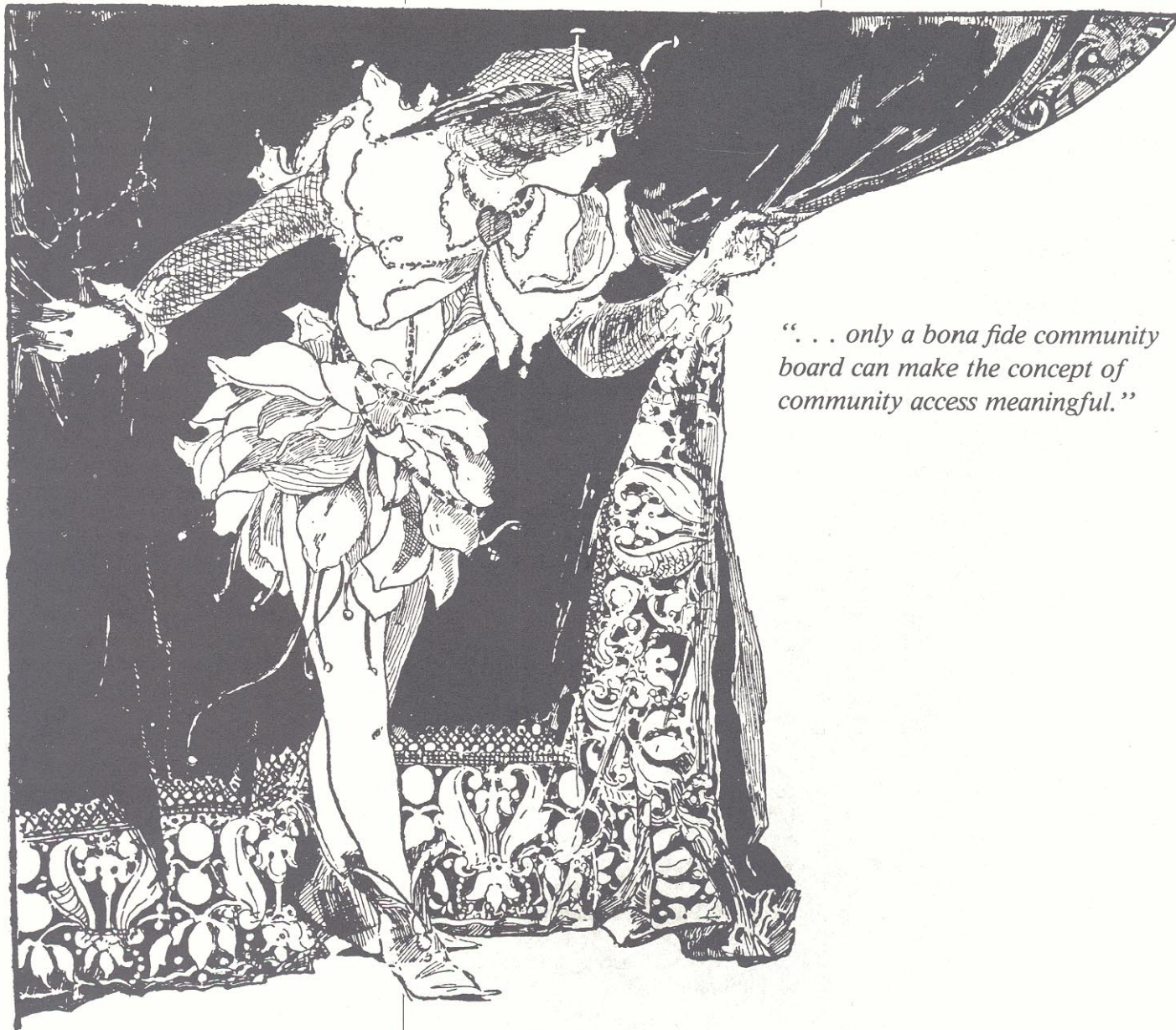
What Batt and Borten could not say was that Deputy Mayor Micho Spring had usurped the planning prerogative, and moved the option discussions a rung higher, into the closed circle of top Mayoral advisors. The process was no longer public, under any pretense, and at the very stage when the public access component was finally being designed. In subsequent direct letters to the Mayor, both the Coalition and BCTV urged the creation of a governing board representative of, and accountable to, the entire range of potential access users; also that community-based organizations and individual users should receive the dominant share of the corporation's resources.

A *Boston Globe* editorial supported these requests. "Only genuinely broad-based representation on the board will allow it to avoid the charge

that it is doling out a form of technological patronage; only a bona fide community board can make the concept of community access meaningful."

Did the lobbying succeed? Partially. In February, Deputy Mayor Spring responded to the community criticism by announcing the future establishment of a 50 member Board of Overseers, which would represent a cross-section of constituencies, and which would monitor the actions of the access corporation's directors (now called Trustees). While the Board of Overseers, like the Board of Trustees, would initially be appointed by Mayor White, unlike the Trustees, the Overseers would eventually be elected from their constituencies. Skeptics responded, however, that the Overseers were given no explicit authority.

Finally, after months of mostly pri-



"... only a bona fide community board can make the concept of community access meaningful."

vate discussions, on March 24, the access corporation's Articles of Organization were filed, and the Boston Community Access and Programming Foundation was born. On the following day the two governing contracts were signed: one between Cablevision and the Foundation, the other between Cablevision and the City of Boston. These events finally put an end not only to speculations on the structures, but also to any possible changes in those structures.

The Foundation's Articles of Organization listed only three Trustees — Daniel J. Finn, President; Martin Kessel (Co-chair of the Cable Television Access Coalition), Clerk; and Bill Chin (restaurateur), Treasurer. The remaining 15 Trustees would be named by Finn (rather than the Mayor) "within a few weeks." Finn also will appoint the 50 members of the Board of Overseers; he has already named to that board Peggy Channen, of Action for Children's Television, and Richard Taylor, of Hi Park Development Corporation. According to the by-laws, the Board of Trustees will be self-perpetuating: they choose their own successors. Also, the president has considerable power: he appoints all the committee chairs, who in turn appoint all committee members.

Though Coalition sentiment was understandably mixed concerning the Foundation's structure, the Coalition praised the operating contract between Cablevision and the Foundation, especially the Foundation's ability to compete with Cablevision's commercial programming. At a time when many cable companies are refusing to lease channels to outside entities because of the competition that would result, Cablevision is providing a nonprofit foundation with not only channels and equipment, but with money to produce programming that may in fact compete with Cablevision's own.

While there are examples of nonprofit corporations that provide access and noncommercial programming, this is believed to be the first example where such a corporation can offer commercial programming, leased access, and other revenue-generating services as well. Other contract features stipulate that Cablevision will provide to the Foundation:



- Start-up money of \$250,000 the first year and \$500,000 the following year; and continuing support of 5% of system revenues.
- Initial use of nine subscriber channels (of which five will be included in the famous \$2 basic service), with eventual right to 20% of subscriber channels; and 36 channels on the fourth cable, the Public Institutional Network.
- Exclusive use of a Main Access Studio, shared use of three neighborhood studios and an ENG van, as well as 50 modulators and cameras.

Daniel Finn was the featured speaker at the Coalition's April meeting, where he addressed the lingering doubts many members had concerning the Foundation's priorities and its community representation. In response to members' questions, Finn stated that the Board of Trustees would include "a sizable number" of community representatives, and will have an open meeting policy. He stated that each of the 50 Overseers would be expected to quickly develop their own constituent-based public meetings. Further, Finn expects the four sector consortia to become even more involved in access promotion and utilization.

Concerning the possible domination of public access uses by institutional uses, Finn stressed that his intention was that public access would get "the highest priority." Some members remained skeptical: what if the 5% does not generate enough money? Foundation Counsel Charles Beard responded, "The Board's going to have to make some hard choices . . . And I think everybody is sensitive to the ability of the universities and the hospitals and others to attract funds to use the cable from sources other than the cable system itself."

Finally, to the much-voiced concern about censorship of public access programming, particularly programming of a political or controversial nature, both Finn and Beard assured Coalition members that beyond the common standards such as "clear and present danger," the Foundation would in no way interfere with the content of public access programming.

More recently, Finn reiterated these assurances at the luncheon session of the NFLCP's Northeast Regional Spring Conference in New York. He also indicated the time frame for further developments. He expects to have both boards completely appointed by mid-June, with possible by-laws revisions approved shortly thereafter. No staff has yet been hired and currently the Foundation's office is Finn's Boston University office. By late June the Foundation will move into a small temporary office at the Boston Public Library. An Executive Director should be on board sometime in July, and should start assembling the administrative staff through August. As Finn said at the Coalition's meeting (quoted in *Multichannel News*, April 26), "By September we should be off and running, or at least walking at a very fast pace." The City is expected to award the final license no later than December 31, of this year. Construction will begin immediately thereafter, and should be completed by mid-1986.

Rob McCausland is a founding member of the Cable Television Access Coalition, Inc.



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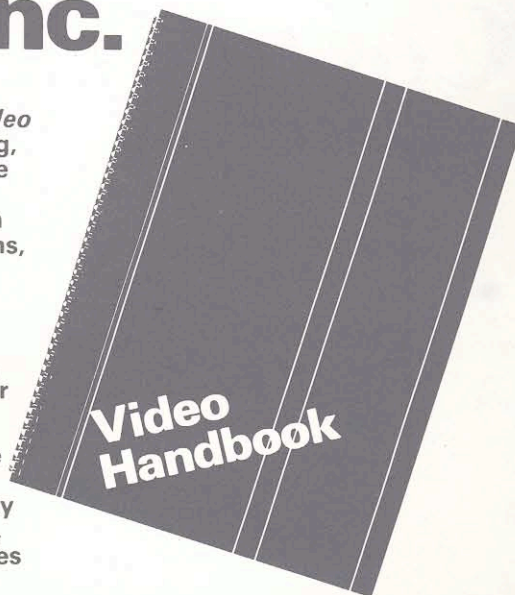
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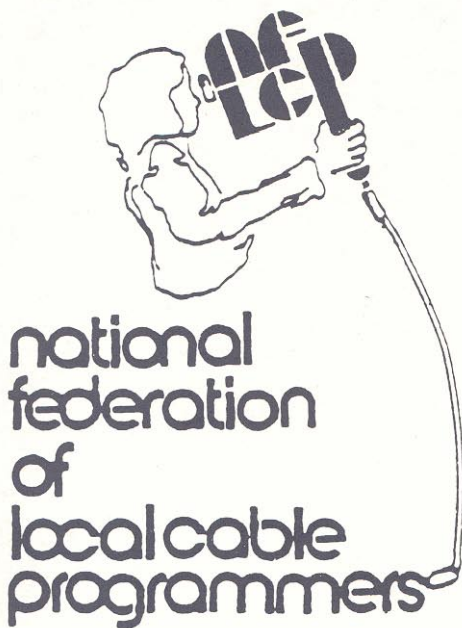
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